

## Higher Essay outlines

### The Growth of German Nationalism 1815-1860

2 types of essay (exact wording and dates will vary).

- A. How important was factor **X** (e.g. economic factors) in the growth of nationalism in Germany during the period 1815 -1860?  
*(a comparison of the relative importance of the factors which influenced the growth of nationalism in Germany)*
- B. Why did it take so long for nationalism to grow in Germany in the period 1815-1860?  
*(an explanation of the factors which were obstacles to the growth of nationalism in Germany)*

*You should NOT just describe or narrate about German nationalism in either type.*

- A. HOW IMPORTANT WAS FACTOR X (e.g. the Zollverein) IN THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN GERMANY DURING THE PERIOD 1815-1860?**  
*(a comparison of the relative importance of the factors which influenced the growth of nationalism in Germany)*

This question can be asked in a number of ways. You may be asked to compare the importance of political nationalism, cultural nationalism, and economic nationalism.

**Political nationalism** – the French Revolution, Napoleon's conquests, nationalism, liberalism.

**Cultural nationalism** - Romanticism, common German language, history and culture.

**Economic nationalism** – the Zollverein, Prussian economic strength, social change in Prussia.

**However the question could also ask you to consider the importance of just one factor (e.g. the Zollverein) compared to the other factors.**

### **Introduction**

- In 1806 Napoleon dissolved the Holy Roman Empire and reduced the 400 states within it to 39. The 1815 settlement of Vienna maintained the 39 states;
- Over time there was a growth of national consciousness within the German lands and there were many factors which influenced this;
- One factor was (e.g. the Zollverein which increased economic integration);
- However there were other factors such as (e.g. French revolutionary ideas and Napoleon's conquests, the influence of romanticism and growing Prussian economic and military strength);
- Historians continue to debate the relative importance of (e.g. the Zollverein) in the growth of nationalism in Germany in the period 1815-1860.

### **French Revolutionary ideas of liberalism & nationalism & Napoleon's conquests (political nationalism)**

- The French Revolution kick-started ideas of nationalism & liberalism in Germany;

- nationalism = desire for a united & independent nation-state  
liberalism = belief that governments should represent the people not just kings etc.
- Desire/need for German unity strengthened by the struggle against Napoleon;
- Napoleon reduced the number of states within the German lands from 400 to 39 making unification of these states a more realistic prospect.

### **Romanticism (cultural nationalism)**

- Writers & artists glorified Germany's mythical past;
- Inspired Germans with a vision of a united country;
- Common German language and culture.

### **The Zollverein (economic nationalism)**

- A customs union began by Prussia in 1818 – no duties paid on goods traded between member states.
- In the 1830s it was established as the Zollverein and included twenty five of the thirty nine German states;
- Member states benefited as their trade and wealth increased. It also increased Prussian economic influence in the German lands;
- Possible economic benefits of further unity – more business, jobs & prosperity.

### **Prussian economic and military strength (economic nationalism)**

- Prussia got Rhineland resources of coal & iron in 1815;
- Prussian industry grew rapidly from about 1850;
- Prussian power based on military traditions & industrial strength;
- Nationalists increasingly saw Prussia as possible leader in unifying Germany.

### **Conclusion**

- A number of factors contributed to the growth of German nationalism;
- At first political & cultural nationalism were probably more important but appealed mainly to a minority of more educated people such as intellectuals, artists and students;
- This growth coupled with the benefits to be gained from economic developments such as the Zollverein meant that nationalism began to appeal to a wider cross-section of Germans such as businessman and workers;
- The Zollverein was undoubtedly very important as it made Germans more aware of the benefits to be gained from economic integration;
- However the French revolution, Napoleon's conquests and romanticism also made people within the German lands consider ideas of national consciousness and opened a debate within the German lands about their future.

***N.B. Remember to adapt your introduction, development & conclusion to focus on whichever one of the main factors is mentioned in the question itself.***

## **B. WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG FOR NATIONALISM TO GROW IN GERMANY IN THE PERIOD 1815-1860?**

*( an explanation of the factors which were obstacles to the growth of nationalism in Germany)*

### **Introduction**

- In 1806 Napoleon dissolved the Holy Roman Empire and reduced the 400 states within it to 39. The 1815 settlement of Vienna maintained the 39 states;
- Over time there was a growth of national consciousness within the German lands and there were many factors which influenced this;
- However there were also factors such as Austro-Prussian rivalry, monarchism, absolutism and the fact that individual leaders wanted to maintain their own power which were obstacles to unification. Religious divisions and the constitution of the German confederation were also divisive;
- Historians continue to debate why it took so long for nationalism to grow in Germany in the period 1815-1860.

### **The constitution of the German Confederation**

- Each state within the German Confederation was given equal power and the Confederation itself had very little power;
- This made it difficult for the Confederation to make meaningful decisions;
- Each state fiercely guarded and protected their individual rights;
- This blocked further centralisation;

### **Monarchism, absolutism and the attitude of individual kings and princes**

- The 39 German states were ruled by individual kings and princes who wanted to protect and maintain their power and separate states;
- Austria saw nationalism as a threat to its multinational empire and followed a policy of repressing nationalism;
- Prussia was controlled by King William. He was determined to maintain absolute power within Prussia;
- The growth of nationalism was hindered by the attitudes of individual kings, princes and absolute monarchs who also associated nationalism with liberalism (rule by the people rather than by kings & princes).

### **Austro-Prussian rivalry**

- Both states wanted to play the leading role within the German lands;
- Rivalry between the two ensured each country kept an interest within the German lands for a long period and this checked the growth of nationalism
- Austria declined in economic and political power in the 1850s;
- She did not join the Zollverein. This left her isolated;
- Prussia grew in strength economically, politically and militarily;
- By the late 1850s Prussia was the strongest power within the German lands.

## **Religious divisions**

- In the German lands there were religious divisions;
- The northern states were mainly Protestant;
- The southern and middle states were mainly catholic;
- Nationalist feeling was stronger in Prussia and the northern states;
- Religious divisions slowed down the growth in nationalist feelings;

## **Failure of the 1848 Revolutions**

- In 1848, as a result of political & economic discontent there were revolutions throughout Europe in which kings were forced to share power with elected parliaments;
- A unified German parliament was established at Frankfurt by liberal nationalists and it looked as though Germany was unifying at last;
- But the Parliament found it difficult to reach agreement on whether to include Austria or not;
- They eventually decided to exclude Austria and offered the throne of a unified Germany to the King of Prussia but he refused it;
- Then the Parliament (which was mainly middle class) had to ask the King to use his army to put down demonstrations by workers who were demanding social as well as political reforms;
- So by 1849 the revolutions and the unified German parliament at Frankfurt had failed and the Kings were able to reassert their power and authority over their separate states.

## **Conclusion**

- The obstacles to the growth of nationalism undoubtedly made it difficult for Germany to be unified earlier;
- Austro-Prussian rivalry ensured that neither country was able to take the lead within the German lands until the 1860s - when Prussia took the lead under Bismarck following a period of sustained economic & military growth;
- The failure of the 1848 Revolutions & the Frankfurt parliament was also a severe set-back for the growth of nationalism and dashed hopes of German unification for over a decade;
- Overall it took a long time for nationalism to grow due to the many obstacles which stood in the way of the unification of the German lands particularly the political & religious divisions within Germany and the reluctance of the rulers of the separate states to surrender any of their power or territory.

***N.B. You may be asked a third type of question like 'To what extent was there a growth of nationalism in Germany between 1815 and 1860?'***

***To answer this you will have to consider (more briefly) both the factors encouraging the growth of nationalism (outlined in essay A) and the factors holding it back (outlined in essay B) and come to a conclusion on how good the prospects seemed for German nationalism by the end of the period.***